

FRANCISVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
PHASE II, 2015 – 2020
UPDATED OCTOBER 2015
UPDATED JULY 2017, OCTOBER 2017

Overview

This five-year strategic plan guides the direction of the Francisville NDC organization as well as provides a framework to achieve neighborhood goals in keeping with the comprehensive neighborhood plan completed in 2007 *Moving Francisville Forward: a blue print for the future*. The strategic plan is updated annually to ensure that the organization and strategic actions are aligned with the vision for Francisville.

Vision

Francisville NDC's vision for the Francisville neighborhood is to grow Francisville into an economically, ethnically diverse neighborhood capable of sustaining a vibrant commercial corridor through well guided equitable development.

In order to achieve this vision, Francisville NDC's goal for the five-year period 2015-2020 is to continue to play an integral role in seeding the commercial revitalization of Ridge Avenue, building organizational and programmatic capacity to better serve Francisville and to improve the overall feeling of safety in the neighborhood through sustained cleaning and greenspace maintenance.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Francisville NDC is to improve the quality of life in the Francisville community through commercial and residential development; implement programs designed to develop youth, aid senior citizens, generally invest in the people of Francisville and our aim is to be a resource for information and communication, insuring that all residents can have an active role in the growth and development of their community.

Francisville NDC's Core Values include:

Dynamic Catalyst: Engaging and empowering the community through information and positive action.

Equity: Being inclusive, respectful, and supportive to all so that we can grow our community together.

Organizational Integrity: Maintaining transparency and accountability to become financially self-sustaining.

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History and Stages of Francisville NDC Organizational Development

Francisville NDC was incorporated in 2003 to address the serious state of decay of the residential and commercial fabric, to stimulate the community to be active in neighborhood growth and decision-making processes, and to disseminate information so that fear of change could be replaced with empowerment.

Since the organization's founding in 2003, Francisville NDC has steadily developed from an unfunded start-up and is emerging as a mature organization targeting sustainable funding sources. This living strategic plan provides a roadmap for Francisville NDC to become a mature organization that contributes to the stability of the Francisville neighborhood. .

2003 – 2006: *Early Stage* – start-up organization; all volunteer; limited funding; planning
2007 – 2010: *Growth Stage* – increased revenue; plan and program implementation; permanent full-time staff
2011 – 2014: *Formative Stage* – costs covered; surpluses generated; expanded programs and services; increased staff capacity
2015 – forward: *Mature Stage* – steady revenue; steady expenses; organizational and programmatic innovation.

Successes

2004: Francisville NDC began implementation of the Francisville Information Network (FIN), a phone and email broadcasting system that allows the organization to disseminate public service information to the neighborhood.

2005: Completion of the *Ridge Avenue in Francisville Commercial Corridor Redevelopment Plan*, created by the Francisville Planning Group at the School of Design of the University of Pennsylvania, was the result of the initiative of Francisville NDC and resulted in several well-attended public meetings.

2006: Awarded a \$100,000 Wells Fargo Planning grant, selected planning consultant, and commenced resident-driven neighborhood planning process.

2007: Completion of *Moving Francisville Forward: a blue print for the future*, the comprehensive neighborhood plan for Francisville. This resident-driven plan outlines the actions that Francisville NDC can implement to guide the equitable development of Francisville for the next 10 to 20 years.

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2008: Launch of the Francisville Youth Community Caretakers Club (FYC-3), an environmental maintenance and landscape training program for Francisville youth ages 13 to 30. The creation of a resident volunteer Clean and Green Committee and the planning of the Francisville Urban Farm & Orchard. Funding secured for permanent full-time Executive Director.

2009: Completion of Ogden Park, a new community green space at 20th and Ogden Streets. The Orchard site planted at 815 Perkiomen Street. Funding secured for seasonal staff. Francisville NDC awarded a \$75,000 opportunity grant from Wells Fargo.

2010: Launch of the Francisville Natural Environment Maintenance Program (F-NEMP) and incorporation of the FYC-3 into the F-NEMP. Orchard re-organized and expanded. Development partner secured and planning underway for the Francis Village Market Place open-air market on the 1600 block of Ridge Avenue. Goal of increasing organization funding to \$200,000 reached.

2011: Francisville NDC applied for and received phase one of a \$750,000 implementation grant from Wells Fargo. Ridge Avenue Revitalization Initiative launched, contracts with PHS increase, corridor manager hired, and awarded a corridor cleaning grant from the Commerce Department. Planned and implemented the Fairmount Avenue Farmers Market with a goal to move the Market to Ridge Avenue when the corridor becomes more developed.

2012: Francisville NDC improved its financial management system. Due to funding constraints, commercial corridor position eliminated. Plans to be financially independent begin to be implemented. Francisville NDC applied for eight city owned parcels on Ridge Avenue in the 1600 block to be developed in partnership with a for-profit development company.

2013: 10th Anniversary! Francisville NDC is awarded eight properties on Ridge Avenue to implement a phased development plan to create “affordable” mixed use commercial space on the ground floor along with market rate apartments and/or condos. Planning on the first phase development for 1608-12 Ridge Avenue commenced for a 14 unit condo building with ground floor and lower level commercial space that Francisville NDC can use to operate a business or lease to a tenant. Francisville NDC chooses HOW Properties as the development partner for 1608-12 Ridge Avenue and secured a commitment for residential rents to subsidize the commercial space. The project breaks ground in October 2013.

2014: Francisville NDC established a for profit subsidiary to build at 1608-12 Ridge Avenue in partnership with HOW Properties. Francisville Urban Farm becomes the home of the UrbanStead Program. Phase two of the implementation funding from Wells Fargo is awarded as well as additional contracts with PHS and the Commerce Department. The neighborhood maintenance program is expanded to include a stretch of Broad Street adjacent to Francisville and includes servicing part of Spring Garden, Fairmount and

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West Poplar. Francisville NDC partners with Youth Build for additional manpower to augment the cleaning staff. Francisville NDC purchased coordinated work gear for the crews and youth workers to help promote the program.

2015: 1608-12 Ridge Avenue is completed. An awareness and neighborhood input event held on April 8 for residents, funders, city partners and press. Francisville NDC actively seeking funds to cover the build and fit out of the space and secure partners for the program operation. Apartments are 60 percent leased.

2016: Francisville NDC applied for and received a CDC Tax Credit of \$100,000 annually for 10 years, totaling \$1 million of funding. The Francisville NDC Board of Directors actively recruited new members including members with legal and financial expertise. Founder and Board begin to work on long-term Executive Director succession plan. New part time administrative staff hired. Development of La Café Enterprise culinary and training program commenced. 1608 Ridge Avenue apartments 100 percent leased and providing positive cash flow. Francisville NDC explores the option of leasing the 1608 Ridge Avenue commercial space to a partnership with (Francisville NDC/Sand Castle Winery/Red Cedar Grill and Bar/Selby Signature Wines), to open a seven day a week restaurant, bar and entertainment venue. Community engagement in *Envision Ridge Avenue*, a planning exercise with University of Pennsylvania School of Design, to ascertain community preference in short-and long-term development of vacant properties. Francisville NDC applied for and is accepted into the LISC program to assist with organizational capacity building.

2017: Francisville NDC continues negotiations with Sand Castle Winery/Red Cedar Grill and Bar/Selby Signature Wines to solidify a joint venture to open a restaurant, bar and entertainment venue in the 1608-12 Ridge Avenue commercial space. Plans commence for the development and programming of 1628-1632 Ridge Avenue including space for La Café Enterprise Program and a year-round open-air Market Place. A pilot model of La Café Enterprise at 1708 Ridge Avenue commences with the Small Seeds Community Café and Artisan Market Place. The La Café Enterprise Program will train and support culinary artisans seeking to do business on the Ridge Avenue corridor. A partnership is formed to open an outdoor Wine/Beer and Food Garden at 1638-40 Ridge Avenue and site preparation commences. Owner of vacant lot at 1716 Girard Avenue offers two-year, \$1 per year lease on the lot for additional farm and/or outdoor market space as need to fulfill Francisville NDC programming needs. LISC support extended to include coaching and training in Real Estate Development. Francisville NDC continues to engage the community on the development of Ridge Avenue and the neighborhood as a whole.

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Challenges

Despite the influx of new residential development and increased residential population, Francisville continues to have a weak retail base on Ridge Avenue that skews the perception of our unique corridor. Vacant and deteriorated storefronts combined with missing or impassable sidewalks along Ridge Avenue compound the negative perception that Francisville is unsafe and impedes Francisville NDC's ability to attract the types of business and increase neighborhood walkability that residents desire. With support by the City and its agencies with these type of quality of life issues, Francisville NDC can focus on building a healthy, vibrant and economically strong neighborhood full of opportunity for all.

Engaging the residents and building a strong and continual volunteer base continues to be a challenge due to limited resources to engage committed communications and volunteer coordinators. In addition to the Francisville Information network, Francisville NDC has implemented a message board system throughout the neighborhood that more efficiently leverages our resources with regard to information dissemination and opportunities for community involvement. Francisville NDC will continue to add new community information boards as resources allow.

Francisville continues to lack neighborhood identity despite the flurry of residential redevelopment and is frequently overshadowed by the better known adjacent neighborhoods of Fairmount and Spring Garden. Neighborhood identity creates a sense of place for residents and a geographic reference to attract more people from outside the neighborhood. Francisville NDC recognizes that it needs to do more to market the neighborhood to put Francisville on the map. Marketing Francisville will help promote new commercial development on Ridge Avenue, encourage residents to support neighborhood businesses, and bring in people from outside the neighborhood to patronize existing and new businesses.

Being the designated RCO for the neighborhood is a time consuming effort but it provide the opportunity for regularly monthly community meetings so that Francisville NDC can continue to provide transparency and information as well as encourage residents to be active in the growth and development of their neighborhood. Francisville NDC needs to promote and market its programs and the opportunities in the neighborhood to both new and old residents. This strategy will help to build more financial support from within the neighborhood in the coming months and years so that Francisville NDC can reach its goal of being 75 percent financially self-sustained by 2022.

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Tactical Goals and Objectives

2015 - 2016:

Year End Status

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and inventory new funding sources, rate each potential funding source and schedule • Build fundraising partnerships and develop annual fundraising plan • Revisit organization structure (roles/responsibilities) and augment staff as needed to accommodate growth • Continue to build volunteer base • Implement a Board Member Recruitment System to attract compatible and qualified Board Members | <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Complete</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

2017 – 2022:

- Maintain current and increase funding and diversity of funding sources to include mission related income from Programs, Real Estate Development and Property Management of all our properties on Ridge Avenue
- Decrease reliance on outside funding sources, increase neighborhood support and un-restricted funds
- Development of 1628-1632 Ridge Avenue
- Increase marketing of “Francisville” to strengthen neighborhood identity with new residents and businesses
- Re-establish a strong Clean & Green Volunteer Team/Group to focus on improving the care and attention to residential areas, advocate for, create and maintain our neighborhood pocket parks, urban growing spaces and public recreation facilities and grounds
- Focus on ways to continue to improve the organizations capacity and effectiveness of program delivery, outreach and information sharing through social media, website, newsletter and message boards
- Create a community driven “comprehensive” business attraction/retention and streetscape beautification plan for Ridge Avenue
- Establish or support the establishment of an independent Business Association for Ridge Avenue
- Implement succession plan

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Summary

Since Francisville NDC was established and particularly since the completion of the comprehensive neighborhood plan, *Moving Francisville Forward, a blueprint for the future*; the organization has accomplished an enormous amount of its goals and objectives with limited financial support achieved by leveraging in-kind donations and neighborhood volunteers.

Since 2010, Francisville NDC has grown its capacity by securing funding to support a full-time Executive Director, part-time administrative staff and to partially fund our neighborhood maintenance program and youth engagement programs and activities. In 2015, Francisville NDC laid the foundation for organizational sustainability through revenue gained from mission related sources and real estate development on Ridge Avenue. The 2017-2020 period is critical for Francisville NDC to build upon its foundation for the continued growth and stability of the neighborhood. Long-term sustainability will be ensured through the establishment of diverse revenue streams, thus allowing the organization to continue current programs and to develop new innovative programs to maximize positive community and economic impact across Francisville.